of them as huge as could be found in the world of their time. The great wall built on the northern marches of Ch'in Shih Huang Ti must have dwarfed the seven wonders of the Mediterranean world, and the imperial residence which he erected at his capital was enormous. So, too, the palaces of Han and the T'ang must have been very extensive. At the height of these dynasties Ch'angan could probably have stood comparison with the other metropolises of those eras in the number of its dwellings and in the spaciousness and dignity of its walls and palaces. Marco Polo, who had been in many of the great cities of his day, saw Hangchow only a few years after it had ceased to be the capital of the Sung and described it as preeminent "to all others in the world, in point of grandeur and beauty." From the extent of its walls, which can even now be traced, from the accounts of contemporary travellers, and from such a surviving monument as the Drum Tower, we can form some conception of the extent and architectural magnificence of Cambaluc under the Mongols.

The lack of buildings and walls from ancient times is due largely to the perishable nature of the materials. Wood has been extensively employed. As a rule, indeed, it has been the chief reliance for the framework not only of private houses but of palaces and temples. Brick has been utilized to fill in walls or for supporting platforms, and not to hold up roofs. Stone appears chiefly in ornamental trimmings. Since, moreover, the great frontier ramparts and the walls of cities have usually been of rubble lined with brick, and sometimes even of tamped unbaked earth, they have not stood up as well as though they had

been of stone.

In spite of the paucity of ancient monuments, it is possible to learn a good deal of the architecture of pre-Ming centuries and to know something of the main stages of its development. Japan possesses very old wooden buildings which have escaped the ravages of fire and war and since some of these caught their inspiration from Chinese models we can form an idea of what the latter were like. Wall sculptures from the Han and later dynasties not infrequently portray buildings, and paintings of the T'ang and Sung of which we have either the originals or copies often include pictures of buildings, from simple huts to palaces and temples. The great wealth of Chinese literature which has come down to us from previous centuries contains useful informa-